

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM IAN CHALMERS B.E., B Econ.

ADDENDUM No 2

The Enigma of the Pre-emptive Release

It appears to be the accepted belief that the easy solution to Wivenhoe Dam and the January floods would have been a pre-emptive release of water, in December, to reduce the possibility of downstream flooding.

Various quantities of water up to circa 600,000 megalitres (>50% of the total capacity) have been mentioned. The last release was circa 300,000 megalitres. The Question is "Would such a release during December 2010 make a significant difference to the flooding in January?"

The answer to this is not as obvious as it appears. It would have assisted the release programme actually used, but it was not necessary with a more dynamic release programme.

Starting from 9am, Thursday 6th January with the dam level at 300,000 megalitres below the historical level;

By midday on Sunday 9th January, all the pre-emptive release had been replaced and was at the same level as that produced by a rational release programme.

As for the existing pre-emptive release, Will this be effective??

Who can say it depends on the details of any incoming flood and the gate operation programme. All of these are unknown, but

assuming the operation of the gates is very much better than the effort just passed, then it would appear to me to be, in reality, a hollow gesture or an admission of future poor gate operation.

Ian Chalmers

9th April, 2011

(See also Spreadsheet Addendum No 1, No 2)